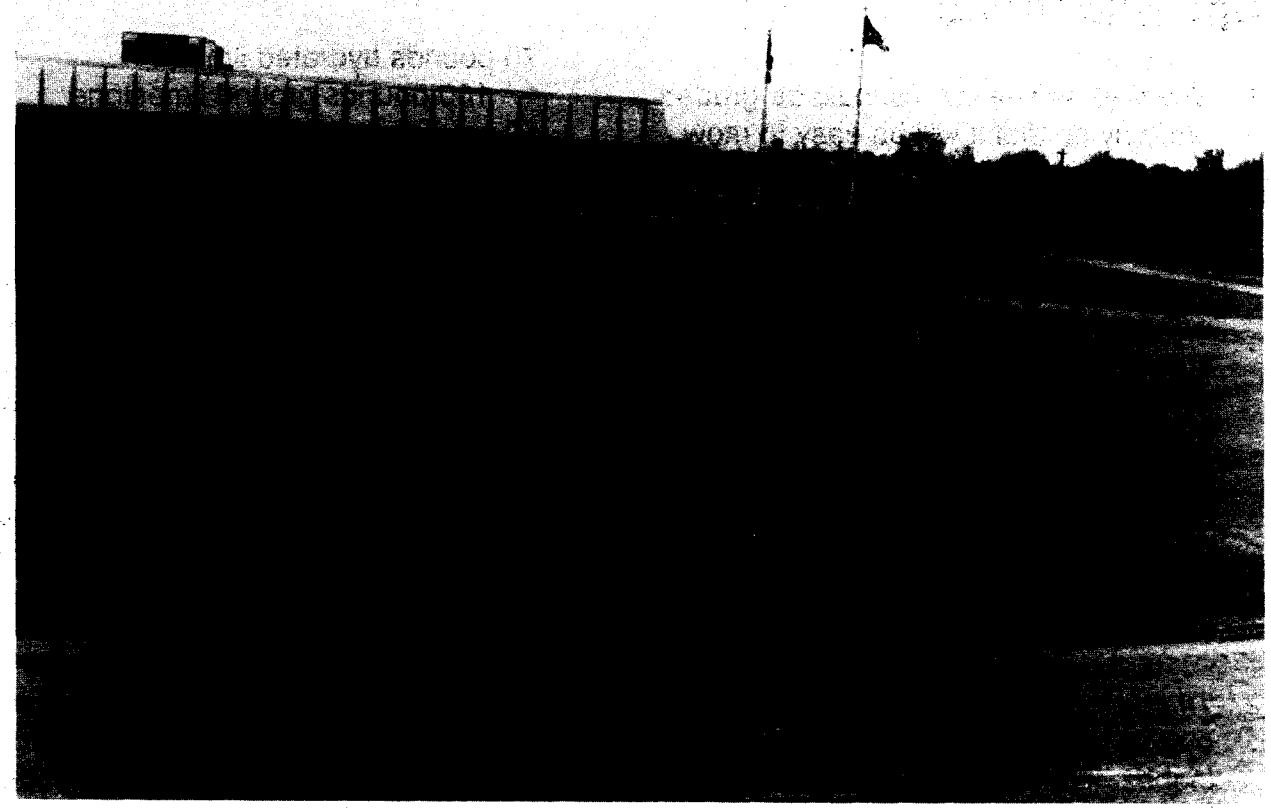
Lawn Seeding

General

Lawn seeding is the most common vegetative practice carried out in urban areas. Most home owners consider grass lawns for their beauty but fail to realize their value in preventing soil erosion. Several items must be considered if a high quality lawn is to be established. Some of these are type of soil, drainage, chemical analysis of soil, the use of the lawn, and type of equipment needed for seeding.



The seedbed for a lawn is being prepared.

Lawn Seeding

Definition: Establishment of a short, dense sod or turf.

Purpose: To stabilize an area around buildings or in parks and improve the appearance.

Where Applicable: Areas around buildings, public parks, and intensive play areas.

Specifications

1. ***Grading*** — The lawn should be graded properly so that it will be easy to mow. The land should be graded so water does not collect in puddles. For most building sites, underground outlets for downspouts should not be combined with foundation drains. Steep terraces should be avoided. Slopes should be kept as gentle as possible. On areas that must be filled in, the surface should be covered with four to six inches of fine soil material (top soil material if available). All rocks and stones that are near the surface should be removed.

2. ***Tillage*** — The area should be thoroughly tilled to a depth of four to six inches. Lime and fertilizer should be incorporated before the last tillage operation. The seedbed should be firm for seeding.

3. ***Liming*** — Lime should be added to correct the soil pH to between 6.0 and 6.5. It should be applied according to recommendations based on a soil test. If the test results are not available when the lime must be applied, apply three tons of ground limestone per acre (150 pounds per 1,000 square feet) and apply the balance when the test results are available. Lime for seedings should be mixed with the top six inches of soil during tillage prior to seeding.

   Ground limestone may not be the most economical form of lime available. For different liming materials, a rough guide for conversion is:

   75 pounds hydrated lime =
   100 pounds ground limestone
   50 pounds burned lime =
   100 pounds ground limestone

4. ***Fertilization*** — Fertilizer should be applied according to recommendations based on a soil test. If test results are not available when the fertilizer must be applied and incorporated, apply 100 to 150 pounds of 10-20-10 prior to seeding and apply the balance when the test results are available. Nitrogen applications should be split as much as practical, a minimum of once each in the spring and fall. If nitrogen can only be applied once a year, it should be applied as urea-formaldehyde, or sulfur-coated urea. Fertilizer for seedings should be mixed with the top six inches of soil during tillage prior to seeding.

5. ***Seeding Date*** — The best time to seed a lawn is August 15 to October 15, especially where weed problems exist. The next most favorable time is in the spring from March 1 to June 15.

6. ***Seeding Method*** — Seed may be sown in many different ways: drilled, dropped with a precision seeder, or broadcast with a cyclone seeder, fertilizer spreader, or hydroseeder. All equipment should be calibrated before use. Seed should be divided into two lots. The second lot should be seeded at right angles to the first. All seedbeds should be firm before seeding and packed or rolled after seeding. Mulch should be applied and anchored on all seedings.

7. **Species Selection** [1]

	Lbs. per [2] Acre
For Regular Lawns:	
Full Sun	
Kentucky Bluegrass	80
Red or Hard Fescue	20
Partial Shade	
Red or Hard Fescue	80
Kentucky Bluegrass	20
For Heavy Traffic or Low Maintenance Lawns:	
Full Sun	
Tall Fescue	100
Kentucky Bluegrass	40
Partial Shade	
Tall Fescue	100
Red or Hard Fescue	40
For Wet Lawns:	
Full Sun	
Tall Fescue	100
Partial Shade	
Rough-Stalked Bluegrass	100

[1] Use cultivars recommended by the West Virginia Agricultural Extension Service. Use turf type tall fescue cultivars, not 'Kentucky 31'.

[2] Rates — 2-3 pounds per 1,000 sq. ft. for regular and wet lawns. Rates — 3-4 pounds per 1,000 sq. ft. for heavy traffic lawns.

8. ***Mulching*** — Mulch all areas for temporary erosion control and moisture retention. Mulch may be straw or hay, wood fiber, or mulch netting. Apply straw or weed-free hay at two tons per acre (100 pounds per 1,000 square feet). Apply wood fiber at 1,000 to 2,000 pounds per acre (25 to 50 pounds per 1,000 square feet). Apply mulch netting according to manufacturers' recommendations.

9. ***Mulch Anchoring*** — Anchor all mulch to insure it stays in place. Straw or hay mulch may be anchored by an asphalt emulsion, chemical anchoring solution, mulch netting, or disc anchoring tool. Wood fiber mulch usually has a chemical anchoring solution mixed with it. Mulch netting is stapled in place with metal staples. Asphalt emulsion is applied at a rate of 150 to 200 gallons per acre (4 to 5 gallons per 1,000 square feet).

10. ***Watering*** — Frequent light watering will aid the emergence of new grass seedings. Watering should stop when runoff begins. Once established, a grass stand will require an inch a week to maintain its vigor. Rainfall should be supplemented by watering until the stand is well established.

11. ***Mowing*** — Mow new grass stands to two inches when they are three inches tall. Fall seeded lawns may not need mowing until the following spring.

12. ***Maintenance*** — Lime and fertilize according to soil test. Split nitrogen applications as much as practical, with a minimum of one each in the spring and the fall. If only one application of nitrogen can be made, use a slow release source of nitrogen such as urea-formaldehyde, sulfur-coated urea, or IBDU. Irrigate in the spring and fall to supplement rainfall to provide an inch per week. Cool season grasses go dormant in the summer and do not need frequent mowing or irrigation. Mow grass so no more than one-third of the height is removed in one mowing. Mowing to two inches when the grass is three inches is ideal for most lawn species.